

## MINUTES FOR MAY 20, 2008 MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Members Present:** Bill Frick, Chair; Ben Snider for William Bronrott; Vice Chair, Ben Stutz for Councilmember Ervin; Alyce Ortuzar; James D'Andrea for Sylvia Morrison, MCPS; John Holey; Kenneth Hartman, Regional Service Centers; Charles Kines, MNCPPC; Linda Sobel Katz; Peter Moe, MHSO; Erwin Mack. **Members Absent:** Steve Friedman. **County Staff:** Art Holmes; Al Roshdieh; Tom Pogue; Andrea Turner; Fred Lees. **Guests:** Richard Hoyer for Councilmember Trachtenberg; Alexandra Shabelski, MC Office of Management and Budget; Bruce Meier, DPWT Director's Office.

### Agenda Items:

1. Introductions
2. Committee Business
3. New CountyStat Initiative and Focus on Pedestrian Safety Program Performance
4. County's FY09 Funding for Pedestrian Safety
5. Update on County's Pedestrian Safety Program
6. Status of new State Safe Routes to Schools Grants
7. Other Pedestrian Safety Activities
8. Committee comment/Issue follow –up/Open discussion/ identification future topics
9. Adjourn

Item: 1. Introductions. The meeting came to order at approximately 7:05 p.m. Members present introduced themselves. The chair, Mr. Frick, opened the meeting and announced his wife had just given birth to a new baby boy. He expressed some concerns about his continuing responsibilities in Annapolis along with his growing family would allow him enough time to continue to serve on the committee. Mr. Pogue noted that there were four positions from the public on the committee plus several designated positions that would soon be coming up for first term completion. The County Executive's office will be advertising these slots, and Mr. Pogue urged all incumbents to submit their requests to serve an additional term.

Item: 2. Committee Business. Mr. Pogue asked members about the use of subcommittees in the past. Ms. Katz said that previously the committee had formed several subcommittees, including subcommittees for Engineering, Enforcement, and Legislative issues. She said these subcommittees would create a work plan for the coming year and hold meetings to work on issues that they would then report on at full Committee meetings. Mr. Pogue said this will be considered for future use as the need arises and will be discussed with the new Pedestrian Safety Coordinator who is about to be hired. This staff person will eventually take over as the primary staff support for the Committee. Mr. Kines suggested different subcommittees to track the County Executive's Ped Safety Initiative. They could monitor progress and serve as a sounding board. Mr. Pogue agreed and committed to develop a list of potential subcommittees corresponding to the seven strategies in the Initiative. Mr. Roshdieh said DPWT will regularly come back to

the Committee with reports on what has been accomplished. Mr. Pogue noted that the name of the Committee had been officially changed last year unbeknownst to many. This was part of legislation required due to the sunset clause present in the originating legislation. It is now the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. The mission remains essentially the same. Mr. Pogue urged Committee members to refer media calls to the County's Office of Public Information (PIO). The PIO has a staff of professionals who routinely handle media inquiries.

Item 3. New CountyStat Initiative and Focus on Pedestrian Safety Program Performance. Mr. Pogue presented an overview of the County Executive's new County Stat initiative. He then shared with the Committee a series of slides that summarized several County Stat team reviews of the Pedestrian Safety Initiative. Discussion ensued about several issues that County Stat had raised, including the need to reconcile various pedestrian collision data sources, other sources for collision data, and types of pedestrian accidents that might not trigger a report at all. Ms. Ortuza commented that she felt other factors, such as resident feelings, should be considered. She didn't believe that it should require a death or injury to precipitate government action. Mr. Hoyer asked if County Stat is going to consider "best practices" as it evaluates programs. Mr. Roshdieh responded that the initial emphasis has been on data analysis, but he expected that other aspects will be considered through the evaluation process. Mr. Hoyer felt a key point is not how precise but how relevant the data is; he also recommended a review of best practices and not hesitating to challenge procedures traditionally being used. It was requested that the members be furnished the link to the County Stat program to learn more about it and the issues it was reviewing. [For reference, this link is <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/statmpl.asp?url=/Content/EXEC/stat/index.asp>.]

Item 4. County's FY09 Funding for Pedestrian Safety. Ms. Shabelski from the County's Office of Management and Budget briefed the committee on the pedestrian safety items within the FY09 capital and operating budgets recently approved by the County Council. She noted that there are additional pedestrian investments that are contained within larger projects and not therefore listed on the slides she was presenting. She also provided comparisons of funding levels with the previous fiscal year. Mr. Meier noted that dips in the funding level of particular projects may occur due to the construction schedule, such that a project may have peaked in its funding in FY08 when the bulk of construction occurred. This will cause it to show a lower funding level in FY09, but would not mean a "reduction in funding" for the project per se. Chairman Frick asked if what was funded in FY09 was in line with what the Executive Branch expected. Mr. Howley asked if we are spending more now than we have ever spent on pedestrian safety. Staff responded that funding levels were in line with what the Executive had submitted to Council, and that an analysis of FY09 versus FY08 funding levels did show stable funding of pedestrian safety-related investments.

Item 5. Update on County's Pedestrian Safety Program. Mr. Pogue provided the committee with updates on various pedestrian safety programs and activities including progress in hiring a new Pedestrian Safety Coordinator and purchase of reflective safety items for distribution to target groups. Mr. Pogue reported staff were interviewing

candidates for the Coordinator position and would expect to introduce him or her at the next Committee meeting. [Editor's note: Jeff Dunckel was subsequently announced as the new Coordinator.] Ms. Ortuzar commented that the flat sided reflective items recently ordered were not as visible as the previous globe-shaped models. Mr. Pogue noted DPWT's contracted trainer had held a training session on Safe Walking to a group of about 20 Northwest High School seniors. These students would in turn be training elementary school students within the Northwest HS cluster, and Mr. D'Andreau advised the Committee on those plans.

Item 6. Status of new State Safe Routes to Schools Grants. Mr. Pogue reported the revised Program Agreement for Grant B has been submitted to the Maryland Highway Safety Office at their request prior to their final approval of the County's second grant. He and Ms. Shabelski reported the Council is expected to approve a supplemental funding request that will appropriate County funding to carry out Grant A and B, with 100 percent reimbursement coming back from the State. Grant A funds a Safer Routes to School Coordinator position. Grant B largely funds engineering and enforcement activities at selected schools, as well as extending funding for the Coordinator through the end of 2009. An application for a Grant C that would continue these activities through the end of 2010 was submitted in time for the application deadline of April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Committee asked that the minutes list the 11 schools covered by Grant B. [These schools are Cannon Road ES, Clearspring ES, Flower Hill ES, Georgian Forest ES, Greenwood ES, Kingsview MS, Thurgood Marshall ES, Martin Luther King MS, Olney ES, Rosa Parks MS, Stone Mill ES] Ms. Ortuzar asked what types of engineering actions would be done at the schools, and Mr. Lees provided typical examples. These include repositioning crosswalks, installing new traffic signs or replacing old ones, identifying safe routes for students and taking steps to ensure these routes are well marked and have no line of sight issues stemming from tree foliage, parked cars, or other factors, etc. Ms. Ortuzar also suggested attention be paid to encouraging students to bike to school and making it safe for them as well.

Item 7. Other Pedestrian Safety Activities. Mr. Roshdieh explained the DPWT Director's desire to create a Pedestrian Safety Steering Committee made up of relevant agency heads and that this group was planning to hold its first meeting in early June. The agencies included the County departments of Fire & Rescue Services, Public Information, Police, Permitting Services; the Chief of Staff of Montgomery County Public Schools; the Planning Director of the Montgomery County Planning Board; and the District #3 Engineer of the Maryland State Highway Administration. This group will serve as a sort of board of directors to assist the DPWT Director in resolving interdepartmental or interagency issues that cannot be worked out at the staff level, ensuring responsibilities for implementing pedestrian measures are clearly delineated among agencies, and setting direction for the County's pedestrian safety program. Ms. Ortuzar asked if the Committee (PTSAC) could be apprised of agenda items and decisions by this steering committee. Mr. Roshdieh said DPWT staff would place a 15 minute item on each Committee agenda to update them on any actions or decisions taken by the Steering Committee.

Mr. Lees went over a table that his Traffic Engineering and Operations section (DPWT) had developed to track actions on a number of pedestrian safety issues that the Committee and others had identified in downtown Silver Spring. Ms. Katz noted this arose from an initiative of the Committee to take a walking tour of the central business district. She was pleased to report that a mid-block crosswalk was installed on Fenton between Ellsworth and Wayne. She also noted that she thought at least three seconds had been added to the pedestrian signals at Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, Fenton and Colesville, and Spring Street and Georgia.

Item 8. Committee comment/Issue follow –up/Open discussion/ identification future topics. Because the meeting was running over the planned adjournment time, the members did not offer comments within this section.

Item 9. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will take place on July 15, 700p.m., at the EOB's 10<sup>th</sup> floor conference room.

Minutes prepared by Tom Pogue, MCDOT.

7/10/2008/H:\CommOutreach\Pedestrian Safety Outreach\Ped Safety Advisory Comm\Agendas-Minutes - Committee Mtgs\Minutes for PSAC-05.20.08.doc